

Worksheet: Diatonic Triads in Major Keys

A. Diatonic Triads in Major Keys

The following key signatures are supposed to represent major keys. Look at the signature and put a key indicator beneath it (such as "F:"). Then, look at the given triad and give it a roman numeral to indicate its function in that key.

Example



F: V

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

B. Making Diatonic Triads

Make the key signature and chord that is requested.

17 18 19 20 21 22

B \flat : iii C: V B: vi D: V F: ii E \flat : vii $^\circ$

BASS CLEF!

E: iii A: IV G: vii $^\circ$ D: ii F: IV C: iv

C. Analyzing Diatonic Chords in Real Music

It is actually very atypical to see simple, neatly-stacked triads in real music. More often, the notes in the harmony will be all spread out, with some redundant notes (or “doublings.”) I’ll try to explain the procedure for identifying harmonies below, and I’ll illustrate with the first measure of Bach’s Prelude in C Major from the Well-Tempered Clavier Book I.

1) Decide where each harmony is, or, in other words, find the boundary lines where the harmonies change. This is actually a very subtle process that you will learn as time goes by. In the Bach excerpt, I would look at the half-note C’s and suspect that that is the basic “speed” of chord changes. I’d eventually notice that the first two half-notes are repeating the same chord, though, and thus the whole measure gets just one roman numeral.

2) Scan through the whole texture and take a mental inventory of all the notes. Try to combine them into a triad or seventh-chord that makes sense. When you are first starting out, it is a good idea to sketch the letter-names above the staff in order to keep track. Then, look at the letter-names and see what triad you have.

(my note “inventory”)

C E G C E G

Moderato ♩ = 112

C: I

I’ve created a somewhat inauthentic arrangement of Pachelbel’s “Canon in D” for you below. The harmony changes with each chord. Give each chord a roman numeral which indicates its function in D major.

D: